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ABSTRACT

Three states, Ohio, Texas, and Arkansas were selected to study implementation of policies relating to the identification of gifted students from special populations, i.e., culturally diverse students, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities. Individual profiles were completed for each state, and a cross state comparison was done to identify overall patterns of factors influencing policy implementation. Thirteen influential factors were identified: professional leadership, outside leadership, public attitude, bureaucratic structure, local initiative, flexible rules and regulations, informal relationships, higher education, economic status, the school reform movement, demonstration projects, seed money, and court actions. Factors differed in their level of influence depending on the state and the phase of policy implementation (whether development or application). The most essential aspect of policy development, from the standpoint of special populations students, was felt to be the design of flexible rules and regulations within a set of clearly articulated guidelines. Two possible inhibiting factors to the application of flexible identification policies are identified, and recommendations are offered to states wishing to encourage the identification of and services for gifted students from special populations. The report concludes that substantial resources and support must be made available to educators at the local level to help them move written policies into active educational strategies. Appendixes present a questionnaire and topic questions used in gathering data from individuals and focus groups. (JDD)

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Gifted Education Policy Studies Program

STATE POLICIES ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED STUDENTS FROM SPECIAL POPULATIONS: THREE STATES IN PROFILE

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STATE POLICIES ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED STUDENTS FROM SPECIAL POPULATIONS: THREE STATES IN PROFILE

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August, 1992

(This research was conducted by the Gifted Education Policy Studies Program at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. The views expressed in this report are those of the author(s) and are not necessarily shared by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement that provided funding under grant number R206A00596.)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gifted Education Policy Studies Program, (GEPSP) of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, was established to analyze and seek solutions to two major issues affecting full educational services to gifted students. These issues are: (a) state and local policies regarding eligibility for gifted programs for special populations of gifted students (culturally diverse, disabled, and economically disadvantaged); and (b) educational reform efforts (cooperative learning and the middle school movement) which may affect services designed for gifted learners.

Prior to this study, GEPSP completed a content analysis of policy documents addressing state-level policies relating to the identification of gifted students from special populations, i.e., culturally diverse students, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities (Coleman & Gallagher, 1992). As a follow up to the content analysis study, three states were selected for further study on the implementation of these policies.

Ohio, Texas, and Arkansas were selected because of their commitment to policies regarding special populations. They agreed to participate in site visits to investigate the process of policy implementation, including the ways policies are developed, gain approval, and are applied at the local-level. The site visits were conducted in the Spring of 1992, by Drs. Gallagher and Coleman, who spent two days in each state. The first day focused on policy development, and the second day on policy application. The State Directors of Gifted Education in each state set the agenda for interviews and focus groups with key people involved in policy development and application.

Individual profiles were completed for each state, and a cross state comparison was done to identify overall patterns of factors influencing policy

implementation. Thirteen influential factors were identified: professional leadership; outside leadership; public attitude; bureaucratic structure; local initiative; flexible rules and regulations; informal relationships; higher education; economic status; the school reform movement; demonstration projects; seed money; and court actions. A rating of the level of influence which these factors had on the state's policy development and policy application process revealed interesting patterns. Across states, the factors differed in their level of influence. In addition, the levels of influence varied depending on the phase of policy implementation (differing for policy development and policy application).

Strong leadership was essential during policy development; however, this leadership could come from a small number of highly motivated people located either within or outside the educational structure. Informal relationship established among this leadership-pool also played a role in developing and gaining approval for the flexible policies on identification and programs. A favorable economic status in the state was helpful in allowing the initiation of new programs. Perhaps the most essential aspect of policy development, from the standpoint of special populations students, was the design of flexible rules and regulations, within a set of clearly articulated guidelines, which encouraged local decision making and responsibility for meeting the needs of these students.

In the policy application phase a greater number of factors became important, and a wider circle of people became influential. Collaboration of leadership at the state and local-levels, both within and outside the educational system, facilitated policy application. In all three states, the bureaucratic structure of the educational system assisted with information dissemination through a network of regional centers or a cadre of regional representatives.

The role of demonstration projects, seed moneys, and local initiatives increased during policy application. Court actions on desegregation, also,

became influential; however, they were not necessarily the driving force behind the initiatives for inclusion of gifted students from special populations. Services for gifted children were influenced by larger school reform efforts like Outcomes Based Education and site based management; however, it is too early to tell what the impact of these initiatives will be.

In each state, the actual application of policies relating to gifted students from special populations depended on many factors. The effort to identify gifted students from culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged, and disabled populations is challenging, and it will take time to see the progress made toward providing services for all gifted students.

Two possible inhibiting factors, to the application of flexible identification policies, emerged from the interviews and focus groups; (a) concern that a substantial increase in numbers of identified gifted children would not be accompanied by an increase in resources for services, and (b) fears that programs will have to answer parents of children not from special populations who demand that their children be included as well. These barriers will have to be dealt with before a universal acceptance of such policies is likely to occur.

Recommendations to states wishing to encourage the application of policies regarding identification of and services for gifted students from special populations include: (a) making a clear, strong, and long-term commitment at the state-level; (b) providing support to the local districts through additional resources and expertise; (c) creating flexible guidelines which require local districts to develop individual plans for policy application; and (d) creating and cultivating collaborative networks among higher education, educators, advocacy groups and leaders outside of the field of education to facilitate policy application.

The direction toward full services for gifted students from special populations is clearly articulated in the policies at the state-level; nonetheless, it is

at the local-level that these policies touch the lives of children. If state policies are to be more than words on paper, then substantial resources and support must be made available to educators at the local-level to help them move written policies into active educational strategies that ensure full services to all gifted students.

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The Gifted Education Policy Studies Program (GEPSP) was established to investigate policies related to the identification of gifted students from special populations who may be underrepresented in programs for gifted students. The study of policy involves an examination of the rules and standards that are established in order to allocate scarce resources to meet social needs. Policies provide information on: who gets the resources, what resources and services will be delivered, who will deliver the services, and under what conditions the services will be delivered (Gallagher, Place, & Shields, 1989).

There are three stages in the implementation of policies: *policy development*, *policy approval*, and *policy application*. *Policy development* involves the generation of the rules and regulations guiding the allocation of resources. *Policy approval* refers to the official sanctioning of the policies by the appropriate authorities, in this case, at the state-level, and *policy application* refers to the actual operationalization of these policies as they are employed (Gallagher, Place, & Shields, 1989). The current study investigates the process of policy development and policy application, regarding the identification of gifted students in three states.

Prior to this study, GEPSP completed a content analysis of policy documents addressing state-level polices related to the identification of gifted students from special populations, i.e., culturally diverse students, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities (Coleman & Gallagher, 1992). As a follow up to the content analysis we selected three states to participate in further research looking at how they developed their policies on the identification of gifted students and how they are currently applying these policies. The site visits focused on the impact of state-level identification policies for gifted students who may be underrepresented in programs for gifted students.

METHOD

Site visit research uses a qualitative research design, by which the researchers attempt to discover the patterns of events as they have unfolded or are unfolding, and then to verify these patterns through information drawn from a variety of sources (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). In this study, an attempt was made to form a portrait of how policies relating to the identification of gifted students from special populations were developed, and of how these policies are currently being applied in three states that have been active in producing flexible policies for identification.

Selection of States

The process of selecting the three states involved a review of the data from the earlier policy analysis (Coleman & Gallagher, 1992) to identify those states with well developed policies regarding the identification of gifted students from special population. In this process, we used purposeful sampling (Patton, 1987) to select states that had attempted to address their gifted students through the development of state policies. We specifically looked for states whose written policies included direct reference to "giftedness" within special populations, and whose policies reflected flexibility and support of local districts in their recognition of these students. In addition to these areas, we looked for states with policies regarding due process, non-standard identification procedures, and unique approaches to finding and serving gifted students from special populations. The final criterion for initial inclusion was some verification that these policies were in fact operational, and not simple "paper-policies." Based on these criteria, 14 states were identified as potential candidates for site visits.

GEPSP reviewed the demographics of these states to identify those with high percentages of culturally diverse students, economically disadvantaged students, and a combination of both urban and rural settings. After this review, seven states

remained viable candidates. We then looked at these states in terms of longevity of state policies and leadership in gifted education, and clustered the states to give maximum representation of regional diversity. The three states finally selected for site visits were Ohio, Texas, and Arkansas; all three agreed to participate in the study.

Data Collection

With this type of qualitative research, the goal is to gather a rich data base providing enough information from a variety of sources and allowing the researchers to develop an accurate description of the events under study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Gallagher and Coleman completed the actual site visits spending two days at each state. In order to gain a complete picture from multiple perspectives, a variety of sources were used. The investigation relied on three primary vehicles for data collection: (a) in-depth interviews with key people, (b) focus groups, and (c) review of documents pertaining to the area of interest (Patton, 1990).

In-depth Interviews. In order to learn about policy implementation, we interviewed key people who had been a part of the original policy development and/or were involved in the application of these policies at the time of the visit. We developed an interview protocol to allow the interview to proceed naturally, yet to ensure that important information was covered (see Appendix A). This structured interview allowed the researcher to focus on areas that address the research topic, while allowing the respondent to provide insights and experiences they deemed relevant to the area of investigation.

The State Director of Gifted Education at each of the three sites identified key people to be interviewed, and these included State Department of Education staff, community/parent advocates, legislators, State Board of Education members, regional and district level administrators of gifted education, and the State Director of Gifted Education. The type of participants interviewed varied from state to state

depending on who were the key players in the policy implementation. We sought a variety of perspectives to ensure a comprehensive portrait of policy implementation.

One or both researchers conducted the interviews and took notes as the interview progressed. In the cases where only one researcher conducted the interview both researchers reviewed the notes to share the information.

Focus Groups. Within the focus group, 8-12 participants were selected because of their knowledge base and experience with the area under investigation. Small group discussions focused on specific topics of interest provided the researcher with multiple perspectives in a relatively short period of time (Brodigan, 1992). The focus group format allowed participants to interact and to provide feedback to the responses of others. The dynamic quality of the focus group often led to clarification of points and to a richer information base than the researcher might have had access to in a structured interview (Morgan & Spanish, 1984).

State Directors arranged the focus groups in each state and the groups included representatives from local districts, advocacy groups, regional and state-level educators, and higher education personnel. The participants in each state varied according to the key people involved with policy implementation. An attempt was made to include multiple perspectives to ensure as complete a portrait of policy implementation as possible.

We developed a focus group protocol (see Appendix B) to guide the conversation toward the information of interest; however, the actual structure of the discussions was informal so that participants could interact comfortably. During the focus groups both researchers facilitated the discussion and compiled notes on the session. These notes were reviewed by the researchers at the end of the sessions to check for accuracy and to clarify questions about the information provided by the respondents.

Document Review. In addition to the use of interviews and focus groups, the researchers also used information from documents pertaining to the identification of gifted students. These documents included state laws, rules, and guidelines previously reviewed in the content analysis (Coleman & Gallagher, 1992); local district policies and program descriptions; state-level grants and proposals to promote initiatives for these students; local districts' responses to court orders on desegregation; advocacy group publications; and, in some instances, videotapes of students and programs under way. We reviewed these materials to provide support and verification of the information collected during the interviews and focus groups.

Data Analysis

The initial analysis of the information involved each researcher's summarizing his/her field notes as a narrative description. The researchers then compared these descriptions to check for accuracy, and further checked them with other sources for verification.

After the completion of all three site visits, we examined the summaries across states to identify factors that seemed to have been influential in policy implementation (see Table 1--Factors and Definitions). In an attempt to "tease out" significant relationships between key factors influencing these policies, we designed a four-point scale (see Table 2--Rating Scale Descriptions) to identify factors influencing (a) policy development, and (b) policy application for the identification of gifted students.

Through a consensus building discussion on each state, we arrived at the ratings of influence for each factor. There were only a few instances in which any differences of opinion about the final rating level occurred, and none of these would have departed more than one step on the four-step scale. We resolved these differences through a careful review of the summary reports, and additional information collected during the visit.

Table 1

Factors and Definitions

Proposed Factors	Description
Professional Leadership	Leadership provided from within the educational system, both state and district levels
Outside Leadership	Leadership provided from outside the educational system including parent, community, and legislative advocates
Public Attitude	Overall response from voters, and public constituencies to the needs of gifted students
Bureaucratic Structure	Organizational structure of the public education system at all levels
Local Initiative	District level programs and services planned to meet the needs of gifted students from special populations
Flexible Rules & Regulations	State policies guiding decision making at the local level for identification and services to gifted students
Informal Relationships	Personal relationships established to facilitate communication
Higher Education	Universities and colleges
Economic Status	Overall stability and level of the state's economy
Larger School Reform Movement	Efforts working to establish change in the educational system (e.g., middle school movement, Education 2000 initiatives, cooperative learning)
Demonstration Projects	Model programs established to pilot strategies designed to meet the needs of gifted students
Seed Money	Funding targeted at enhancing services for gifted students from special populations
Court Action	Litigation aimed at desegregation of school programs

Table 2

Rating Scale Descriptions for Factors of Influence on State Policies

No Influence - 1

This factor did not seem to play any meaningful role in the total effort. Although some momentary effect might be identified, it was neither sustained nor powerful.

Slight Influence - 2

This factor made a small but measurable difference in the policy action taking place. Although there were other factors that were more important, this added somewhat to the total effort.

Modest Influence -3

This factor was an important element leading to the desired policy action. Its presence made the action taken much easier and was a major contribution to the total effort.

Strong Influence - 4

This factor was judged to be one of the keys to successful policy actions. Although other factors might also be significant, it would be hard to consider the action being taken without this factor present.

Next, individual profiles of each state were compiled as narrative descriptions of policy implementation. These profiles were sent to the three participating State Directors of Gifted Education for their review. We included a questionnaire to assist them in checking the profile for accuracy and completeness (see Appendix C). In addition to their review, we encouraged the State Directors to get feedback on the accuracy of the profiles from others knowledgeable on policy implementation in their state. All three State Directors accepted the profiles as presented and offered only minor clarifications.

At the next level of analysis, the three states policy profiles were analyzed to compare key factors of influence across states. The results of these analyses revealed interesting patterns showing a variety of combinations of the influential factors.

RESULTS

Profiles of Individual States

The initial data analysis consisted of constructing accurate profiles for each state, which described the process of policy implementation from its initial development through its application at the time of the site visit. The individual profiles are presented in the order of the visits.

Ohio. On January 23 -24, 1992, Drs. James J. Gallagher and Mary Ruth Coleman visited with key people involved in Ohio education for gifted students. We spent the first day examining policy development, and the second day looking at policy application.

Policy Development

Ohio has a long history of attention by cities and communities to gifted students, dating back to the initiation of the Cleveland Major Work Program in 1922.

Interest in gifted children, from the state-level, however, began in the 1950s. At that time, an advisory board was formed to look at gifted children. Gifted was defined by an IQ score of 130 or above, or by scores at or above the 98th % on standardized test measures of achievement. In the early 1960's a State Department supervisor was appointed for gifted education, and some attention was given to gifted low achievers and special populations. This interest waned; however, when the state supervisor's position was eliminated due to budget cuts in 1963. It was not until the early 1970s that the current policies, which included identification of gifted students in cognition, specific academics, creativity, and the arts began to take shape. In 1975, state-level funding was reinstated and a small amount was made available to support local programs.

The movement toward establishing policies related to gifted students came almost entirely from the State Department of Education leadership. Several State Department personnel attended the National/State Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and Talented Conference in Aspen, Colorado, and these individuals remained in key decision making and leadership roles within the state, giving a strong commitment to gifted education.

The Ohio State Department of Education leadership has remained remarkably consistent since the early policy initiation days and almost all of the efforts on behalf of gifted students in Ohio can be attributed to this leadership group and to their informal, as well as, formal relationships. Without the presence of a legislative "champion," and with no consistent citizen advocacy base, leaders from the State Department were able to design and gain approval for initial policies related to gifted children.

The early policies relating to gifted students were permissive in nature, allowing local districts to identify gifted students, and the current policies reflect this local discretionary model as well. At this time, although identification of gifted

students is mandated, services for gifted students are not. Early policy developers deliberately created this peculiarity in their policies to insure that the policies would gain approval. The initiators of these policies believed that local advocacy groups would move toward full service requirements once the students were identified.

Although little specific attention was given to gifted children from special populations in the early state policies, the rules were written in a flexible manner allowing local districts to design their own policies. One exception to this pattern was the Essex program (a summer program for gifted students) guidelines that include the phrase "fair representation" and where the focus has been on full inclusion of culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged gifted students.

The reason for the decision to use the limited state funding available to provide a cadre of regional consultants was to spread the support across the state and to act as a catalyst to local districts in hopes that they would provide additional support. With the exception of the Essex summer program for gifted youth, which was housed on the university campus and directed by the individual who had been the first state consultant for gifted in the early 1960's, there seemed to be little input from higher education, during the initial phases of policy development.

Policy Application

At this time in Ohio (1992), there continues to be strong support for gifted education from within the State Department of Education. The presence of the Ohio Association for Gifted Children, which combines the state cadre of regional coordinators with citizen advocates, shows another level of support. Higher education has been involved in the application of policies through the provision of preservice and inservice classes in gifted education. There is also some support for gifted education from members of the state board of education.

The Essex summer program continues to serve as a model for the identification of gifted students from diverse backgrounds. In addition, the Ohio State Department has awarded a number of competitive grants to local districts which are designing and implementing programs for gifted students. The focus of these grants has been on the culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged students, and gifted students with disabilities. The attention paid to these gifted children, however, seems to be largely determined by regional needs.

The eight urban districts with the highest concentration of culturally diverse students have come under court action for desegregation. In these areas, attention has been focused on ways to ensure that the enrollment in programs for gifted students reflects the district diversity. A variety of strategies have been used to address this need, including broader selection criteria with careful screening of the general population for potentially gifted students and magnet schools for gifted students where enrollment is balanced to reflect the population. The form of service delivery ranges from self contained classes to cluster grouping with consultant support.

Ohio's rural districts face a different dilemma, that of economic deprivation. In these areas, educational programs rely almost entirely on state support with little local financial backing. The populations in the rural districts reflect little cultural diversity; however, the poverty levels are high. Because of the nature of these districts, the emphasis has been on staff development for classroom teachers, cluster grouping, and identification of economically disadvantaged gifted children.

Unlike the urban and rural districts, Ohio's suburban districts face fewer economic difficulties, and identification of culturally diverse students is not a major issue. This is because of the small numbers of culturally diverse students present,

most of whom are not at risk for being overlooked. The suburban districts were paying some to gifted students with special needs, particularly the learning disabled gifted.

The current efforts toward school reform have also had an impact on gifted students. Ohio has several schools called "schools for the future" where strong emphasis has been placed on the use of technology. The Outcome Based Assessment movement is also underway. It is too early to know, at this time, what effect these initiatives will have on gifted students.

The nature of Ohio's state mandate, which requires identification but not services, seems to have set up an interesting paradox. Although the original intent was to increase local advocacy for gifted children, the result seems to have been the reverse. The identification process is done "in house", and the information is not automatically sent to parents. This means that parents may not be aware that their child has been identified and, therefore, may not act as advocates for service. This may be especially true for parents of gifted children from special populations. This lack of a strong advocacy for gifted showed up in the recent budget cutbacks made to adjust for the economic decline facing the state. While some programs for exceptional children faced only a reduced cut in budget, in a large part due to their advocates, gifted education took the full cut.

Future Directions for Policies

The current initiatives underway in Ohio include continued support through competitive grants for local programs focusing on gifted students with special needs. The State Department is re-examining the need to work on a state mandate for services, and looking at the funding structure for gifted programs. The new Management Information System, a computer data base, may be used to document how many students are currently identified but not served. One initiative currently

being explored is the provision of state-supported college education to culturally diverse and disadvantaged youngsters graduating from high school with strong academic records.

Summary of Key Aspects of Ohio's Policy

The key factors that seemed to contribute to the ongoing development and application of policies in Ohio include:

1. strong commitment to gifted students from the State Department leadership
2. continuity of leadership at the state-level, allowing for both formal and informal relationships to build over time
3. presence of a regional "cadre" consultants to help disseminate information and provide support
4. court initiated desegregation action that focused attention on gifted students from culturally diverse populations
5. the presence of broad and flexible rules and guidelines that allow local districts discretionary power.

Texas. On March 2 - 3, 1992, Drs. James J. Gallagher and Mary Ruth Coleman visited with key people involved in Texas education for gifted students. We spent the first day looking at policy development and the second day examining policy application.

Policy Development

Texas has a fairly long history of attention to the needs of gifted students. The initial state legislation was passed in 1977 permitting local districts to identify and serve gifted students; however, no funding accompanied this legislation. The Texas Association for the Gifted/Talented (TAGT) was formed in 1978 and remains an

important advocacy group for gifted students. In 1979, through the work of TAGT advocates and a legislator who adopted this issue, legislation was passed creating a funding structure that ensured support for gifted education. At that time, Texas was experiencing an economic boom, and funding was fairly easily secured.

The first state plan for services for gifted students was adopted in 1981. This included attention to gifted students from special populations. Texas' definition of "gifted" includes four areas (general intellectual, specific academic, creative/productive thinking, and leadership abilities) and gives broad guidance for identification at the local-level. The state mandate for services to meet the needs of gifted students passed in 1987 to be implemented in the school year 1990-91. Rules regarding assessment and services were revised to reflect the new law in 1990. In 1990, the Texas State School Board of Education passed a provision, as part of it's rules on student assessment, requiring that district programs for gifted students reflect the demographics of the local population. The continuity of program growth over the years has added to the stability of services for gifted children. In part, this stability has been enhanced by longevity of the involvement of some of the key people. Over time, trust and mutual respect seem to have developed in the informal relationships of the people involved in the policy development.

The initial efforts in policy development in gifted education came from the combined energy of educational leaders in the Texas State Department, together with citizen advocates, and some local district input. Early policy developers made a conscious attempt to build consensus, and to create a set of policies that would be both supportive of local efforts and flexible regarding application. During each phase of policy development, attention was paid to the needs of gifted students from special populations (culturally diverse families, economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and students with disabilities). There was little input from educators in higher

education into the nature of the policies developed; however, the National/State Leadership Training Institute provided support and assistance to the early policy developers.

Policy Application

As part of the visit, we learned about the ways that policies are being applied. At this time, there continues to be a strong level of support for gifted education in Texas. The continued importance of the State Department leadership in gifted education was evident along with the valuable contributions made by the regional centers. A few of the regional centers have helped local districts consolidate their resources for gifted education, and have provide staff development and program support. In these instances, the centers make a vital contribution to the programs. The regional centers also serve as a dissemination point to share information on meeting the needs of gifted students.

In Texas, the presence of flexible state rules and guidelines is seen as a plus in both identification and the provision of services to gifted students from special populations. Along with this flexibility, however, some local districts expressed concern over having to take responsibility for this decision making. Each district is required to have a written plan for identification and service delivery for gifted students. The local districts' commitment to students from special populations seems strong although there was a wide variety in their responses to the needs of special students. Many of the districts have begun using portfolios to assist with identification. Screening procedures were used by some districts to help locate gifted students from special populations, and a variety of program options are being used to meet student needs.

In some of the larger districts, court orders for desegregation have played a part in the policy implementation. In these circumstances, the court actions have

generally enhanced efforts already underway, and they have not been the driving force behind services to gifted students from special populations.

Texas support from advocates of gifted education remains strong and continues to include an emphasis on special populations of gifted students. Although the role of higher education in policy development was somewhat limited, they have played a part in the application of policies through offering course work and degree programs in gifted education. The presence of the Javits Grants program initiatives seems to have had a positive influence on policy implementation.

The educational policies for gifted students are being implemented in the broader context of educational reform efforts currently shaping Texas policies. One of the current educational restructuring directions that Texas has adopted is "site based management." The movement toward more autonomy at the school site level reinforces the importance of the state mandate for services, and highlights the need for staff development for principals. A second reform effort underway in Texas is the Outcome Based Education movement. This focus will have an impact on gifted learners through the level of the outcomes set for student achievement. At this time, educators concerned with gifted children are participating in setting the outcomes for learning. This may lead to challenging outcomes along with opportunities for students to demonstrate early mastery.

The focus on outcomes has also extended to the schools through the implementation of "progress reports" to assess school performance. If the provision of appropriate services for gifted children becomes part of this assessment it could have a positive effect on programs. The overall effect of school reform on programs for gifted students remains to be seen.

The current economic status of Texas is similar to other states; Texas is facing a deep recession. Although this economic shift could have led to reduced services for gifted students, programs for gifted students seem to be secure in spite of the

limited economic growth. One of the key issues facing educators of gifted children in Texas is the large number of "English as a second language" students in the overall population. Many of these students are from families that have few economic resources and a migratory work pattern. This combination leads to difficulty when students change school districts and come under different identification guidelines. These difficulties increase the likelihood that these gifted students will be overlooked.

Future Directions for Policies

The current initiatives underway for gifted students in Texas include a growing concern for creating an educational environment supportive of diversity. The State's approach is through preservice education courses on multi-cultural education; the recruitment of teachers from diverse cultures; and the conscious design of programs that respect diversity; and the development of specific criterion for meeting the needs of students identified for a gifted "talent pool". Other state initiatives involve looking at the current funding cap (5%) to expand the number of students who can be funded, and at developing some exit criteria to assist local districts with re-evaluation of students who may no longer need to be served through the program for gifted students.

Summary of Key Aspects of Texas' Policy

The key factors that seemed to contribute to the ongoing development and application of policies in Texas include:

1. combined commitment from educational and advocacy leaders with an early emphasis on gifted students with special needs
2. the development of flexible rules and guidelines that allow for local discretionary power

3. the gradual development and implementation of policies with careful attention to coalition building to ensure broad-based support
4. the presence of a legislative champion who would work for the approval of the policies.

Arkansas. On March 4 - 5, 1992, Drs. James Gallagher and Mary Ruth Coleman visited with key people involved in Arkansas education for gifted students. We spent the first day looking at policy development and the second day examining policy application.

Policy Development

Arkansas has a fairly long history of attention to gifted students beginning in the early 1970's with initial interest from the State Department of Education. These earliest efforts, however, did not seem to have any lasting impact. In the mid-seventies, the movement for gifted education began with the guiding influence and energy coming from citizen advocacy. The leadership came from two parent advocates who used their informal connections with key decision makers to work for the establishment of services for gifted students. During this time the main thrust for policies came from outside the educational community, and the early success of the policies relied on the network of trust established between advocates and decision makers, largely by-passing the professional leadership.

These early policies in Arkansas included attention to gifted children from culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged families, and a broad base of support for gifted education was built. In the late seventies, initial legislation was passed that included a state definition of "gifted". Arkansas defined gifted students as those students with potential, or demonstrated abilities in intelligence, task commitment, or creativity, who are in need of qualitatively different educational

services. This remains the current definition, and was structured to be inclusive. This initial legislation allocated small amounts of seed monies to establish programs.

A key event in the policy development was a retreat held in 1983. It was during this retreat that Arkansas' actual policies took shape, and several key elements of the current policies originated at this meeting. The formation of a Governor's Advisory Council, the initiation of a Governor's School, the development of a state mandate for services, and the nature for the funding structure (which became an integral part of the state budget) were all initiated at this retreat. As part of the initial funding structure, seed money was made available, for a two year period, to allow school systems to develop programs for gifted students. This money went toward staff development and administrative positions at the local and regional levels. Almost all school districts took advantage of this funding and so when the two year developmental period was up a solid foundation had been laid. Because some of the retreat members were legislators, it was easier to pass the initiative during the next legislative session. The economic status of the state, while never rich, was stable at the time, and the climate from state leadership was one of progress through innovation and energy.

The Arkansas Governor's Advisory Council played a central role in setting up the Governor's School, which later became the model for appropriate identification of gifted students. The Council, in combination with leaders from the legislature, continued to pressure the State Department to fulfill the mandate of services for gifted children. Members of the Council also persisted in their efforts to get a masters program in gifted education established through higher education, and to support the development of parent/professional advocacy association.

Early policy developers specifically designed the policies to be inclusive of ALL children who are gifted; this philosophy was pervasive. This was seen as the "right" thing to do, and was felt by all to be critical to the success of the programs. The early

advocates shared their concerns for gifted economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse children whom they had known, and also remembered the early difficulties with desegregation that had marred the history of education in Arkansas. As a result, special population students have been included as an integral part of the policies from their inception.

Policy Application

As part of the visit, we learned about the ways the policies are being applied. At the present time (1992) there continues to be a strong level of commitment to meeting the needs of gifted students: the Arkansas State Department of Education has an Office of Gifted Education within its exceptional children's division; parents and teachers have a state-level advocacy group, and the local school systems follow the state lead in providing services to gifted students.

Educators have integrated the effort to meet the needs of gifted students into the total educational program in several innovative ways. A pre-school program has focused on early talent development; an after school program provides student enrichment and parent support; old textbooks were cut up to make "take home books," and a Black-male minister was hired to assist with developing self-esteem in young Black boys. These programs were initiated with gifted children in mind; however, they all depend on the commitment and resources of the overall educational program for their success.

The State Department personnel play a key leadership role in the application of state policies. The provision of support to Arkansas local districts comes directly from the state office and also through the regional centers established through the State Department. The regional centers play a vital role in the staff development of educators at the local-level and also provide resources to assist districts with their programs.

There continues to be strong support for gifted education from parent advocates, key legislators, and the Governor's Office. The presence of a state mandate, combined with funding that is built into the state budget, have created a situation of stability that has been maintained even during current economic difficulties. This stability is important, given the influence of current educational reform movements that sometimes deemphasize exceptional children's needs. One of the reforms which Arkansas is adopting is "site based management." This was seen as potentially beneficial to gifted students by local leaders we spoke with; however, it will mean that greater emphasis needs to be given to staff development for principals. The overall effect on programs for gifted students has yet to be seen.

Currently, there seems to be some contribution from the higher education system in the form of teacher certification, and masters degree programs. Demonstration programs, including Javits Grants (Federal demonstration money), also have some impact on the programs for gifted students. The presence of Arkansas Governor's School model for identification has had a strong impact on the identification of gifted students from special populations. Concerns still remain that some economically disadvantaged students are unable to attend the Governor's School program because they need to work during the summer.

The application of policies related to gifted students from special populations seems to be continuing through the combined efforts of educational leadership and citizen advocacy. Court actions have played an indirect role in facilitating appropriate service to children in some districts where desegregation court cases have arisen. These court actions, however, seem to provide increased leverage to accomplish the pre-existing commitment to full service rather than being the driving force behind these initiatives.

Future Directions for Policies

The current initiatives underway for gifted students in Arkansas include plans for a state residential school for math and science, modeled after the North Carolina school. This effort is being supported by the Governor's Office and should have a positive influence on gifted education across the state. An increased effort to recruit culturally diverse teachers for gifted programs is being made and continued staff development in meeting the needs of gifted students from special populations is planned. In addition to these educational efforts, Arkansas has adopted the Education 2000 initiative, and this will probably effect programs for gifted students.

Summary of Key Aspects of Arkansas Policy

The key factors that seem to have contributed to the ongoing development and application of policies in Arkansas include:

1. the combined efforts of advocates and decision makers in the early stages, joined by strong leadership from educators in the application phase
2. an atmosphere supportive of innovation and a climate of trust between the key people involved
3. the initial establishment of policies that gave structure and guidance while maintaining a high degree of autonomy for local discretionary power in application
4. the conscious development of broad definitions and guidelines designed to facilitate the identification of gifted students from special populations
5. the establishment of a strong state-level commitment to gifted students through the mandate and funding structure
6. the establishment of a support system of staff development and resources through the regional centers

7. the innovative incorporation of the goals for gifted students into the overall educational programs.

COMPARISON OF STATE PROFILES

The three states under comparison are Ohio, Texas, and Arkansas. The descriptions of the history and current development of policies relating to the identification of gifted students for each individual state have been presented in narrative in the previous section. To look at the significant relationships among key factors influencing these policies in all three states a cross state comparison was necessary. The states were compared using the four-point rating scale (Table 2) developed to differentiate the levels of influence of key factors.

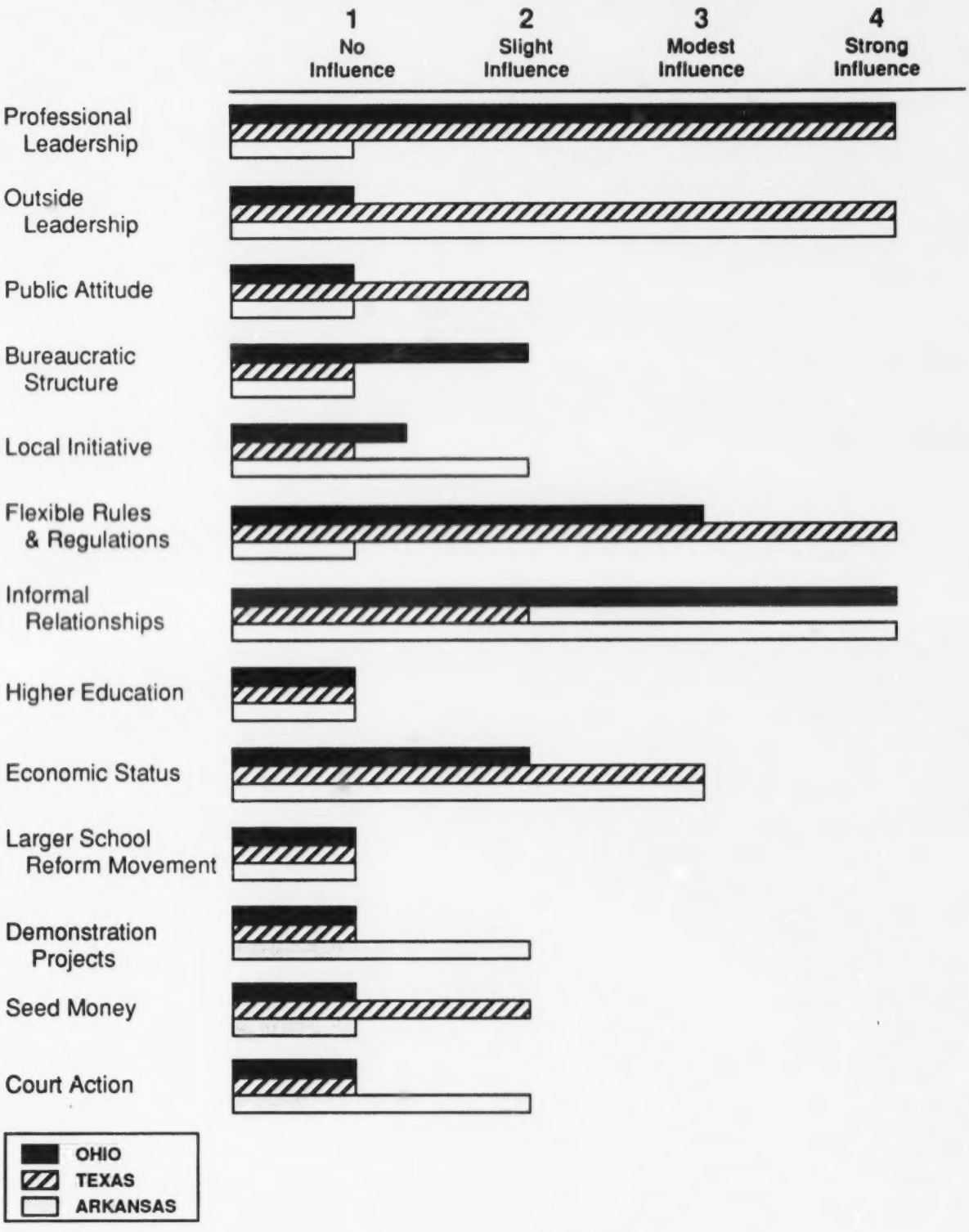
Figure 1 summarizes those factors deemed to be influencing the policy development phase of strategies for the identification of gifted students for all three states. As seen in Figure 1, professional leadership and outside leadership (persons outside the professional field such as parents, legislators) were extremely important in the development of these identification policies. In the state of Ohio, the strongest influence was from professional leadership within the Department of Education itself, with key members of that staff showing a continued interest in the development of policies and programs for gifted students.

In Texas, as can be seen in Figure 1, there was interest shown by both outside advocates and persons within the Department of Public Instruction that combined to generate the policies. In Arkansas, two or three prominent private citizens seemed to provide the original catalytic force to get the program moving, with little or no initial assistance from professional leadership within the Department of Education itself.

In two of the three states, another strong influence in policy development was considered to be the informal relationships that were formed among key people. In Arkansas, the informal relationships linked together key members from the private

Figure 1

Factors Influencing Policy Development:
Identification of Gifted Students from Special Populations



sector with significant players in the Governor's Office and the state legislature. Informal relationships, in Ohio, seemed focused largely on friendships within the Department of Public Instruction itself, cutting across vertical lines in the bureaucracy and allowing for constructive communication across those lines.

The informal relationships played a less significant role in Texas, with strong outside leadership and professional leadership joining hands to work together for gifted students. In this setting, trust was built over time and through common interests, forming informal relationships that bound together key people in the policy development.

Another variable considered was the role of the economic status of the state at the time the policies were developed. In both Texas and Arkansas, there seemed to be relatively favorable financial circumstances that allowed decision makers to think about new program development. To a lesser degree, this was also true of Ohio. It would seem that at least modestly positive economic circumstances need to be present in order to allow for program innovation of this type.

As important as it is to look at those factors that strongly influenced policy development, we must also consider those dimensions that seemed to have little or no influence. In all three states the role of higher education in *policy development* seemed minimal. Public attitude and local initiatives also had little influence in the policy development of identification procedures.

In all three states, there seemed to be a small cluster of people, either inside or outside the state government, who had the vision of what needed to be done and the influence to be able to get it done. The use of *demonstration projects*, *seed money*, or *court action* as a stimulus for policy development was minimal in the three states. What this suggests is that there is no need for a huge public outcry, significant university commitment, nor major local initiatives in order to develop these policies. It can be accomplished through a small cadre of people who have come to an

agreement as to what needs to be done and are able to push the appropriate levers to achieve their goals.

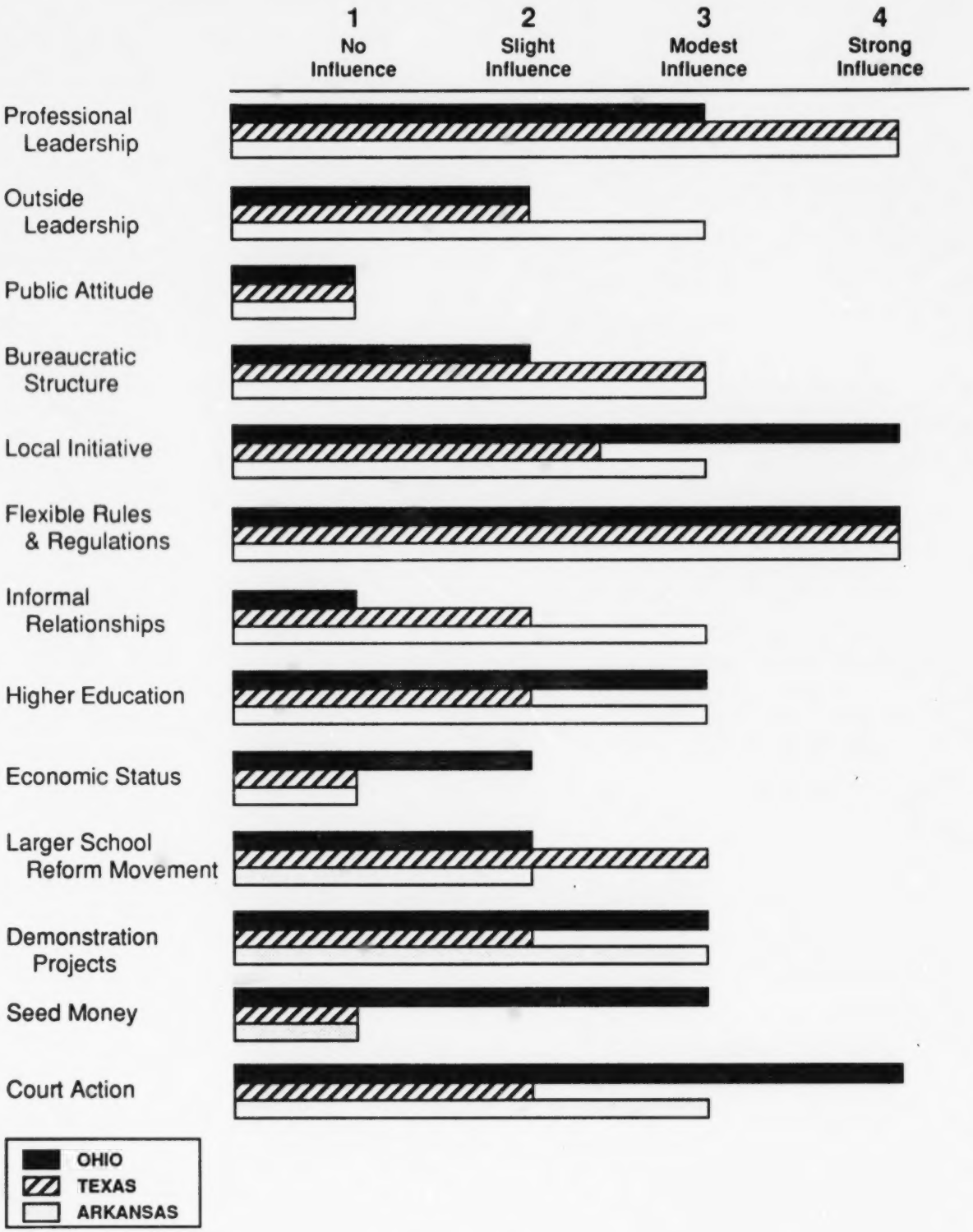
Figure 2 indicates the factors influencing the *policy application* of identification procedures for special populations of gifted students. This analysis dealt with those forces that influenced the translation of policies into action at the local-level. Comparison of Figure 1 on policy development with Figure 2 on policy application shows a much larger set of factors influencing the application of policy than was true in its original development. Again, *professional leadership* within the State Department of Education played a modest to strong influence in all three states and, of course, the *flexibility of rules and regulations* that were established and are currently being used is critical to the implementation of these policies. The flexible rules and regulations that were present in the state policy allow local communities to pursue identification initiatives in their own way.

Although local initiative was not important in the original establishment of the policy, it became quite significant in the application of these policies because they are applied at the local-level. Also important in *policy application* is a bureaucratic structure that allows for this flexibility to be manifested in appropriate ways. In the case of the bureaucratic structure, the regional networks of centers in Texas and Arkansas did seem to be significant in helping these flexible identification policies get established at the local-level. Public attitude, in all three instances, played little or no significant role in these decisions, which were kept largely at a professional level.

As Figure 2 indicates, the larger school reform movement, which was not in effect when many of these policies were originally developed in the state, now begins to play a significant role in policy application, particularly in Texas, and to some extent, in the other two states. The overall impact of school restructuring efforts on programs for gifted students remains to be seen.

Figure 2

Factors Influencing Policy Application:
Identification of Gifted Students from Special Populations



In all three states court actions have helped to shape services for gifted students from special populations. In Ohio, this role was very direct in the desegregation orders directed at the eight urban school districts. Court actions also have had an effect on Arkansas and to some extent on Texas. The actual implementation of policies related to the identification of special populations of gifted students seemed to have been affected by court action, the reform movement, and, to some extent by, demonstration projects that showed practical application of the general policy statements. In Arkansas, informal relationships and outside leadership continue to play a significant role. This may signify that in a smaller state, such factors can be more influential than in more populous states.

With policy application, there is a formal responsibility for providing staff development to prepare teachers to work with gifted students, and therefore, higher education has played a larger role than was originally the case during policy development.

Overall, the presence of flexible rules and regulations combined with strong professional leadership seem to be key factors in the application of these policies, but the bureaucratic structure in terms of the role of regional centers, local initiatives, and court actions have all played a role.

It would seem that there is greater involvement by more institutions and by more people as we reach the policy application stage, so that although a small number of individuals can develop the policy, a much larger and more diverse group of people and organizations are necessary to carry out effective policy application.

DISCUSSION

In looking at the dynamic nature of policy implementation, we considered it's three levels: *policy development*, *policy approval*, and *policy application*. We examined policy implementation in light of the political, economic and social contexts

which surround it (Barrett & Fudge, 1981; Marshall, Mitchell, & Wirt, 1986). The process of policy implementation relies on combining key factors in the right proportions and sequence in order to meet with success. This process is illustrated in the policy profiles of the three states: Ohio, Texas, and Arkansas. In looking at the ways policies relating to the identification of gifted student have been established, we reached the following conclusions:

Policy Implementation Can Take Many Routes

In each state--Ohio, Texas, and Arkansas-- the same key variables were present; however, in each state these variables were combined in different ways and exerted differing levels of influence on the policy outcomes. There is not one "correct" way to establish such policies; each state developed its own pathway, and yet each arrived at a working set of policies that address the needs of gifted students from special populations.

Factors Influencing Policy Implementation Change Depending on the Stage of the Process

During *policy development* , a small number of highly motivated people seemed to be able to initiate and drive the policy formation, and the relationships among these key people seemed to provide a structure for their efforts. At this early stage of policy implementation, the critical variables seem to be the intensity of motivation and a willingness to persist in policy development and policy approval efforts. Later, in the phase of *policy application* at the local-level, a much wider circle of people were involved and many other factors are introduced as crucial to the successful application of policies. At the stage of policy application, many variables play a key role in the effective utilization of policy.

One interesting lesson is that you can establish state programs or policies without a huge body of the public, or even a majority of elected officials demanding them. It was generally sufficient to have one or two respected lawmakers expressing a desire to see these policies established. As long as the economic consequences of these policies were not a significant factor in the state budget, there was an inclination to respect the wishes of these key leaders. When a citizen advocate group was added to the mix and made reasonable requests, this considerably enhanced the chances of favorable action.

Economic Status of the State Influences Policy Implementation

The economic status of the state influenced both policy development and policy application. During the policy development phase, it seemed that reasonable economic circumstances enabled new policies to gain approval. However, once these policies had been approved and accepted as part of the overall state educational policy, they were less vulnerable to temporary economic setbacks experienced by the state.

Communication of Policy Intent Affects Policy Outcomes

A number of local program directors, in gifted education, were not aware of the degree of flexibility provided in the state policy, regarding the identification of gifted students. In addition many local leaders were unaware of the correct process for establishing more flexible policies at the local-level. Many local program directors would participate in a broader range of identification procedures, if they only knew how.

With each state, the level of communication of policy intent to the local districts and the level of support provided for policy application varied. States either took a passive/permissive role essentially saying that the policies were in place that

permitted local districts to identify and serve gifted students from special populations, or they took an active/encouraging role by providing support and incentives to local districts working to apply these policies.

The role the states played seemed to be directly related to the structure of relationships between the professional leadership and other advocacy groups in the state. Where there seemed to be open and frequent communication of the policies intention and clear support to reach policy goals, there also seemed to be more collaboration among educational leaders and other advocates.

One of the proactive steps that could be taken by state leadership, possibly with the collaboration of higher education personnel, would be to conduct a series of workshops in various regions of their state on the topic of flexible identification standards. This would allow a discussion, by local personnel, about acceptable policies and procedures for the identification of gifted students.

Flexible Rules and Regulations Affect Policy Application

The presence of flexible rules and regulations in all three states seemed to facilitate policy application, allowing local decision makers enough discretionary power to shape their programs appropriately. Educators at the local-level had made a wide variety of responses when applying the states' policies.

In one of the states--Ohio--the flexible policies guiding identification of gifted students that were established were not designed specifically for the special populations that are the major concern of this study. However, because they were flexible, they were rather easily adapted for the purpose of finding gifted students "hidden" in the culturally diverse, or economically disadvantaged populations.

Local autonomy was seen as a mixed blessing by some administrators at the local-level. The lack of additional resources provided from the state combined with a lack of knowledge on the part of local personnel on how to identify and meet the

needs of gifted students from special populations created a dilemma for many local administrators. An additional concern was that flexible and inclusive identification models would open a floodgate of students that could overwhelm local programs for gifted students.

Broader Educational Context Surrounding Gifted Education

With the advent of school reform movements, each of the three states is experiencing some interaction with policies and services for gifted students and new initiatives for transforming schools. At this time, little is known about the impact of school reform on gifted students; however, there seems to be room for collaboration between gifted education and school reform that could be mutually beneficial.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In each state, the actual application of policies relating to gifted students from special populations depended on many factors. The effort to identify of gifted students from culturally diverse families, economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and disabled populations is challenging, and it will take time to see the progress we are making toward providing services for all gifted students.

Two possible inhibiting factors emerged from interviews and focus group discussions. One barrier was the fear that the substantial increase in numbers of students eligible for gifted education programs, which would result from more flexible identification policies, would not be accompanied by an increase in state and local financial commitments. An increase in students, without a concomitant increase in resources for services, would undermine these programs, and given the current conservative financial climate in all three states calls a posture of caution.

Another barrier involves the fear that in opening the "floodgates" in an attempt to redress the demographic imbalance of some gifted programs, the programs would

be beset by parents with children not from special populations demanding that their youngsters be included as well. This would divert the attention from the targeted group of students in culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged and disabled populations. These are very pragmatic reasons for limited policy application of flexible identification policies at the local-level, and they will have to be dealt with before a universal acceptance of such policies is likely to occur.

Recommendations

Commitment and Support. It would seem that merely writing state policies regarding identification and services for gifted students from special populations is not sufficient to reach the goal of full inclusion. In order to reach this goal, local school districts will need a strong, long-term, commitment of support. This commitment should begin with clear communication of policy intents from state-level educators to local-level educators. Support to school districts should include: (a) increased material and financial resources; (b) information on appropriate identification and service delivery strategies; and (c) ongoing technical assistance to aid districts in developing appropriate programs. Moving written policy into "action-strategies" requires active interest in policy application from the state-level combined with the provision of specific methods and tools to achieve the policy intents.

Flexible Guidelines. Local districts in the three states we visited benefited from the presence of clear, but flexible guidelines regarding gifted students from special populations. These guidelines allowed districts to design program options which matched the needs of their students. This decision making power resulted in a stronger sense of program ownership toward these students from district-level educators. The requirement of a written plan of action showing how the district

would address gifted students from special populations further strengthened the commitment to meet their needs. States wishing to encourage the application of such policies might consider using these strategies.

Collaboration in Policy Application. The efforts of many people were required to move the flexible identification and service delivery policies into action. Collaboration among higher education; educators at the state and local levels; advocacy groups; and leaders outside of education was essential during policy application. The relationships which allowed for this collaboration hadlly been built both formally and informally over a long period of time. These relationships were enhanced by a sense of trust and shared purpose which facilitated communication. Collaborative networks can be deliberately created and cultivated, and because they are so important to policy application, attention should be given to their development in the early stages of policy implementation.

The direction toward full services for gifted students from special populations is clearly articulated in the policies at the state-level; nonetheless, it is at the local-level that these policies touch the lives of children. If state policies are to be more than words on paper, then substantial resources and support must be made available to educators at the local-level to help them transform the written policies into active educational strategies that ensure full services to all gifted students.

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APPENDIX A

TOPICS/PROBE QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH KEY PEOPLE:

--How was/were the policy(ies) developed?

Who did what? (the overall development process)
Key roles were played by whom?
When were these policies developed?
What was/were the impetus(es)?
- legal considerations?
- court cases/litigation?
- inside pressure? from where in the system?
- outside group pressure? what group(s)?
  - minorities
  - parents
  - local/state/national associations
  - legislators
  - state agencies (Human Services, etc.)
  - higher education people/researchers
  - advocacy groups
  - superintendents
- political changes/pressures?

--How was policy approval gained?

Through "official sanctioning" stages/levels of the Central Educational Office?
Budgetry approval by the Legislature?
- Additional funding provided for policy?

Mandated? (Explain what this means for your state)
- Governor
- Legislature

What key people were involved in the policy's approval?
- minorities
- parents
- local/state/national associations
- legislators
- state agencies
- higher education
- advocacy groups
- superintendents

In what position(s)/departments were the key people?
Involved all along the process? or at different stages?

What barriers were there to the approval of the policy?
What enabling factors were there to the approval of the policy?

--How has/have the policy(ies) been implemented?

Who did what?
Key roles played by specific people/departments?
(List of groups above--go through)
Who? In what position(s) were the key people?
All along the process? or at different stages?
By Dissemination from the Central Office?
(of Information and/or of Skills?)
Issuance of Policy Statements?
On-site visits?
Conferences?
Newsletters/Other Publications?
Pilot Studies?
Media/Public Relations Statements/Stories?
By Strategies of Implementation?
Bringing in specialists from outside the agency?
By setting up mechanisms for interagency policy development prior to this policy?
By using "old boy network" relationships?
By creating task forces, commissions, or advisory groups?
By sharing staff or having them act as liaisons?
By Training Programs?
Central Office organized?
Regionally organized?
Locally organized?
Training of whom?
of teachers? of principals? of regional coordinators of gifted programs?

--What is happening "out" at the local level?

In what ways do these policies "impact" at the local levels?
Diverse or standardized?
why? what factors/"mechanisms" affect this?
pop. make-up?
wealth of school district?
rural versus urban?
existance or non-existance of strong local advocacy groups?
? other factors ?
Same schedule of implementation or staggered?
how decided if different?
overall time schedule devised?
Other "mechanisms" affecting the implementation?
grant restrictions--monies, scheduling, stages, evaluations of pilots, etc.?

--Enabling factors to Overall Policy?

People?
Legislature?--Current Political Climate?
Advocatory Groups?
Private Industry?
History/Precedents?
Current State Conditions--budget, etc.?
Existing Policies?
Policy Development Process?
State Government Structure?
Availability of or non-availability of resources?
    affected by "political climate" (past?, present?)
        overall "tightening of the belt" currently
            for the state?
        position of education in overall state's
            needs?
            education $ versus transportation $
            versus ? other funds?
        conservative "bootstraps" ethic replacing
            affirmative action support?

--Barriers to Overall Policy?

People?
Legislature?--Current Political Climate?
Advocatory Groups?
Private Industry?
History/Precedents?
Current State Conditions--budget, etc.?
Existing Policies?
Policy Development Process?
State Government Structure?
Availability of or non-availability of resources?
    affected by "political climate" (past?, present?)
        overall "tightening of the belt" currently
            for the state?
        position of education in overall state's
            needs?
            education $ versus transportation $
            versus ? other funds?
        conservative "bootstraps" ethic replacing
            affirmative action support?

--Monitoring/Evaluation of Policy Outcomes?

Being done in a systematic/regulated fashion?
    formally/informally?
Who is doing what? How is this process broken down?
    Local? Regional? Central?
    standardized throughout the state?

same timeline followed?
How do you know you have succeeded or not?
what kind(s) of data/"outcomes" are being used?
standardized throughout the state?
how were these selected?
how have they been collected?
how have they been analyzed?
"Ripple Effects" (positive and/or negative)?
in what programs/areas?
expected or not?
leading to new policies or changes in other areas?
created enabling factors or barriers to the policy implementation?
To what changes/influences on current and/or future policies and practices has the evaluation of the implementation of this/these policy(ies) led?
major or minor changes?
impending changes? or distant possibilities?
extension of the current policy(ies)? or curtailment?
in all areas of the policy or just specific areas?
increased or reduced popular, "citizen" support gained with evaluation of policy(ies)? or not affected?
increased or reduced educators', "expert" support? or not affected?

--Do you believe this policy has been a good idea?

--A number of states are thinking about implementing policies in this area--What advice would you give them?
Any specifics to consider/to do/to avoid?

APPENDIX B

TOPICS/PROBES TO BE COVERED IN STATE REGIONAL COORDINATORS' FOCUS GROUPS

Introduction/Opening Remarks (Focus Group Facilitators and Participants):

--What is the "overall feeling" about its success as a policy?

Is support for the policy waxing or waning?
Do you believe the policy will remain in effect?

--How has/have the policy(ies) been implemented?

Who did what?
Key roles played by specific people/departments?
Who? In what position(s) were the key people?
minorities
parents
local/state/national associations
legislators
state agencies (Human Services, etc.)
higher education
advocacy groups
superintendents
All along the process? or at different stages?
By Dissemination from the Central Office?
(of Information and/or of Skills?)
Issuance of Policy Statements?
On-site visits?
Conferences?
Newsletters/Other Publications?
Pilot Studies?
Media/Public Relations Statements/Stories?
By Training Programs?
Central Office organized?
Regionally organized?
Locally organized?
Training of whom?
of teachers? of principals? of regional coordinators of gifted programs?

--What is happening "out" at the local level?

Diverse or standardized?
why? what factors/"mechanisms" affect this?

pop. make-up?
wealth of school district?
rural versus urban?
existance or non-existance of strong
local advocacy groups?
? other factors ?

Same schedule of implementation or staggered?
how decided if different?
overall time schedule devised?

Other "mechanisms" affecting the implementation?
grant restrictions--monies, scheduling, stages,
evaluations of pilots, etc.?

--Enabling factors to Overall Policy?

People?
Legislature?--Current Political Climate?
Advocacy Groups?
Private Industry?
History/Precedents?
Current State Conditions--budget, etc.?
Existing Policies?
Policy Development Process?
State Government Structure?
Availability of or non-availability of resources?
affected by "political climate" (past?, present?)
overall "tightening of the belt" currently
for the state?
position of education in overall state's
needs?
education $ versus transportation $
versus ? other funds?
conservative "bootstraps" ethic replacing
affirmative action support?

Barriers to Overall Policy?

People?
Legislature?--Current Political Climate?
Advocacy Groups?
Private Industry?
History/Precedents?
Current State Conditions--budget, etc.?
Existing Policies?
Policy Development Process?
State Government Structure?
Availability of or non-availability of resources?
affected by "political climate" (past? present?)
overall "tightening of the belt" currently
for the state?
position of education in overall state's
needs?

education $ versus transportation $
versus ? other funds?
conservative "bootstraps" ethic replacing
affirmative action support?

--Monitoring/Evaluation of Policy Outcomes?

Being done in a systematic/regulated fashion?
formally/informally?
Who is doing what? How is this process broken down?
Local? Regional? Central?
standardized throughout the state?
same timeline followed?
How do you know you have succeeded or not?
what kind(s) of data/"outcomes" are being used?
standardized throughout the state?
how were these selected?
how have they been collected?
how have they been analyzed?
"Ripple Effects" (positive and/or negative)?
in what programs/areas?
expected or not?
leading to new policies or changes in other areas?
created enabling factors or barriers to the policy implementation?
To what changes/influences on current and/or future policies and practices has the evaluation of the implementation of this/these policy(ies) led?
major or minor changes?
impending changes? or distant possibilities?
extension of the current policy(ies)? or curtailment?
in all areas of the policy or just specific areas?
increased or reduced popular, "citizen" support gained with evaluation of policy(ies)? or not affected?
increased or reduced educators', "expert" support? or not affected?

--A number of states are thinking about implementing policies in this area--What advice would you give them?
Any specifics to consider/to do/to avoid?

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire

In an attempt to capture the profile of .state/ policies related to the identification of gifted students from special populations, we have completed the following summary. It is essential that the information contained in this profile be accurate and comprehensive. We also, however, wish to be succinct.

We would be grateful if you would review the profile with the following questions in mind to help us verify the accuracy of our understanding.

1. As you read the .state/'s profile, please note any errors (information, sequence of events, dates, etc.) which may have been made.

2. Has any key aspect of policy development and/or application been omitted?

3. Are there other future initiatives, which will have an impact on gifted students, that were not mentioned?

4. As you reflect on the critical aspects of the success of .state/'s policies, are the ones identified accurate and comprehensive?

5. Does the profile, as a whole, capture your understanding of .state/'s policies appropriately?

Thank you for your assistance with assuring the quality of our information.

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